in the district Shimla of Himachal Pradesh have to go to Rohar Post Office located at a distance of 7-8 kilometres from these villages, for payment of telephone bills;

(b) whether Government would make some arrangement for payment of telephone bills at Lowerkoti Branch Post Office in order to facilitate the subscribers of the said villages; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Lowerkoti, Branch Post Office was authorized by the Chief Post Master General, Himachal Pradesh (CPMG, H.P.) to collect telephone bills w.e.f. 1.11.2002. However, the collection of telephone bills at this Post Office has not started yet. Accordingly, H.P. Telecom Circle has requested the CPMG, H.P., to get the arrangment enforced immediately.

Licenses for basic service providers

2956. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chairman, TRAI wrote to Secretary, Deptt. of Telecommunications raising question about the safeguard provided in the license for basic service providers to use WLL with limited mobility to maintain distinction from cellular mobile services;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's contention thereon;

(c) whether some basic service licensees are today offering mobile services through public advertisement on a national roaming basis; and

(d) if so, Government's response thereto as licenser and the details of the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The existing licensing provision envisages adequate safeguards.

(c) and (d) The reported advertisement of basic service provider offering mobile services on national roaming basis has been reportedly withdrawn and the matter is *sub-judice*.

Universal Service Obligation levy

2957. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are collecting 'Universal Service Obligation' levy from all telecom operators for funding expansion of the telecom operations in the rural areas which are not so remunerative;

(b) if so, whether this levy is accruing to the Consolidated Fund of India; and

(c) if so, the details of the amount collected, so far, and the manner in which this fund is going to be deployed and utilised and other details arising therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended apportionment of universal service levy @ 5% of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR). This levy is a part of the total license fee to be paid by the various service providers such as Basic, Cellular, National and International Long